

REMARKS

Applicants believe that there is a fundamental misunderstanding about the invention defined in pending claim 31. Applicants believe that the present amendment to the claim and the following remarks should help clarify the scope of the invention, and that such clarification should result in the claim deemed sufficiently distinguished from the cited art that it should be found novel and non-obvious, and therefore patentable in view of that art.

Applicants have amended claim 31 to define that the carrier material for the first electrolyte is a porous material having an inner porous structure defining pores with surfaces, wherein said surfaces are coated at least partly with a layer of a **second perfluorinated surface-active substance different from said first electrolyte**, wherein said first electrolyte is contained in said pores with coated surfaces. The invention defined in claim 31 thus specifies that the porous carrier material has two different compounds within it. On the one hand, there is the "second" perfluorinated surface-active substance which coats the surfaces of the pores. On the other hand, there is the "first" electrolyte which is contained within the pores with coated surfaces. As discussed in the specification of the present application, coating the pores with the perfluorinated surface-active substance makes it easier to imbibe the electrolyte into the pores. The claim also specifies that the second perfluorinated surface-active substance is different from said first electrolyte.

By contrast, both of the cited references disclose only the impregnation of the pores of the carrier material with a single substance. There is no teaching or suggestion in either reference of first coating the surfaces of the pores, and then impregnating a second, different substance into the pores.

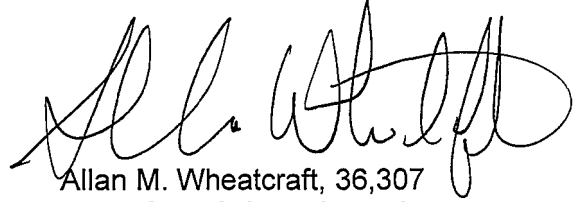
Addressing this difference, the Final Office Action states that:

With regard to a second perfluorinated surface-active substance different from said first electrolyte being present, Branca et al. teach that in another embodiment, one paste extruded tape or membrane can be layered, with another paste extruded tape or membrane to produce an asymmetric composite form of the invention in which the node-fibril microstructure is different on one side as opposed to the other. Lamination is achieved by preparing an extrudate of each membrane and rolling down as described further above; and then combining the two membranes into layers, followed by calendering, drying, and the stretching, sintering, and stretching again, all as described further above (Col 3 lines 60-67).

Lamination of multiple carrier layers, each impregnated only with a single substance, is not analogous (and certainly not anticipatory or obviating) to the claimed invention of a single carrier material having pores with its surfaces coated by one material and also containing a second, different material. Simply laminating two carrier materials, each with a single substance contained within its pores, only means that you have multiple layers of singly impregnated carrier materials. Even if the substance is impregnated within each carrier layer is different, it still does not teach or suggest the claimed invention wherein the first material is coated on the surfaces of the pores and the second material is contained within those same coated pores.

Applicants have realized significant surprising results with their claimed invention, as detailed in the present specification. Nothing in either of these cited references teaches or suggests Applicants' invention. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claim are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan M. Wheatcraft', written over the printed name.

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